

Statement

France blocking Human Rights monitoring in Western Sahara

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Statement by Ahmed Boukhari, Representative of the Frente POLISARIO to the United Nations, New York, 28 April 2010 .

As the Security Council prepares for tomorrow's consideration of a new resolution to extend the mandate of MINURSO – the UN Mission for the Referendum in the Western Sahara – the Frente POLISARIO strongly denounces ongoing efforts by France to block proposals to establish a mechanism to monitor and protect human rights in Western Sahara.

France has worked actively to shield Morocco from any international scrutiny of its serious and repeated human rights abuses in the occupied territory of Western Sahara. Spain's Deputy Prime Minister Maria Teresa Fernández de la Vega confirmed at the UN on Monday that Spain supports human rights monitoring as part of MINURSO's mandate.

France's rejection of human rights for Western Sahara is in direct contradiction to its self-proclaimed status as a founder of the modern human rights movement. France's position is also dismissive of strong views from a number of members of the Security Council that the UN must address human rights concerns in Western Sahara in a substantive way.

Morocco's human rights abuses have escalated to such an extent that they are now the major stumbling block in the negotiations between the two parties, the Frente POLISARIO and the Kingdom of Morocco.

France's actions are a vote against human rights and a vote against the peaceful resolution of the 35-year-long conflict over the decolonization of Western Sahara.

MINURSO is the only contemporary UN Mission without human rights monitoring as part of its mandate. In a 2006 report kept secret by France and Morocco, the UN's own High Commissioner for Human Rights recommended that international human rights monitoring be established in Western Sahara.

Ahmed Boukhari, POLISARIO Representative to the UN
